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ABSTRACT

A Men's Family Learning Project was conducted in Bristol to induce men, many of whom were unemployed, to take advantage of learning opportunities and to volunteer to interact with children in the Hareclive Primary School. Following a survey of educational needs in the community, a project director (a male with experience as a volunteer and ties to the community) was hired to carry out the project. Based on the needs assessment, three "taster," or sample, courses in woodworking, computers, and bricklaying were developed and taught to men (fathers, grandfathers, and older brothers of students) who volunteered to work with the children on a project. (The computer course was an adults-only venture since the men did not feel comfortable around computers.) Twenty-five men participated in the project, which resulted in improvements for the school, interaction with male role models for the children, pride in accomplishments for both groups, and an easy reintroduction to learning for the men. The courses received good publicity in the local media and are expected to be repeated and expanded to more locations in the future. (Appendixes contain such items as the following: information used to advertize the project director position; the questionnaire used to collect data about the skills and interests of men in the community; a press release and fliers to encourage men to get involved in the project; and an evaluation form for the courses.) (KC)

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University of the West of England
BRISTOL

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

Mens Family Learning Project

Hartcliffe, Bristol

April 1998

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  George Robinson — University of the West of England
  Jane Taylor — Bristol Community Education Service

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Report of the Mens Family Learning Project, Hartcliffe 1998

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1 Background

The idea for the Mens Family Learning Project was initially identified by Bristol's Community Education Service.

Results of monitoring from the Community Education family learning programme revealed that most courses were almost exclusively attended by women. Even in areas where men's traditional sources of employment have collapsed, and more women have entered the labour market, family learning courses still tend to be dominated by women, both as tutors and participants.

At the same time, concern has been growing both locally and nationally about the relative underachievement of white working class boys. The time seems right to find new ways of encouraging more men from peripheral and urban housing estates into schools, both to support childrens learning and to facilitate their own development.

When NIACE invited applications for their 'Extending Learning Communities' Awards, the Community Development Curriculum team prepared a Mens Family Learning Project proposal.

2 Project Aims

The initial aim of this project was to carry out needs analysis and development work to establish an innovative Mens Family Learning Project. It was intended that the research would target men living on an estate where residents are not easily accessing adult learning opportunities to establish:

- in what ways men are already supporting their own or other children's education and what they feel they can offer to enhance children's learning, either at home or at school
- the barriers they face in relation to existing family learning courses in Bristol
- what support, training or volunteering opportunities they would like to further develop their co-educators role in supporting children's learning

It was proposed that the project would be jointly developed and steered by local organisations who had shown an interest in the area of men's family learning, including the University of the West of England, schools and voluntary organisations. A development worker would be employed to carry out the initial research and outreach work to enable more men to take part in learning activities to support them in their role as co-educators.

It was also proposed that the research would target South Bristol where estates are characterised by high levels of long-term unemployment, poverty and low take-up of further education and training. It was anticipated that the research and development work would lead to the creation of new types of learning programmes, and a need for new training opportunities for male tutors.

3 Intended Project Outcomes

In the initial project outline, it was proposed that the project development worker would carry out a range of tasks between February and the end of April 1998. During this pilot phase, the worker would:

- set up and support a project advisory group made up of representatives from local community groups, schools, the University of the West of England and Bristol City Council's Community Education Service. This group would support the worker in all other research and development tasks

- carry out research into good practice, both locally and nationally, into men's training projects, particularly family learning programmes

- liaise with and carry out research with men through a range of individual and group contacts to find out about their current learning opportunities, future aspirations, and the contribution they could make to family learning programmes

- consult with a range of additional interest groups to find out what support and resources they could contribute towards a men's programme, including local schools, employers, voluntary organisations, further education colleges etc.

- plan and deliver a men's tutor training programme in collaboration with the University of the West of England, to be run in a local venue in April 1998

- to prepare 2 pilot men's family learning courses for the summer term 1998, including tutor appointments; course outline; accreditation prepared; publicity designed, printed and circulated etc.

- produce an evaluation of the Mens Family Learning Project

4 Appointment of Development Worker

When funding was confirmed, staff from Bristol Community Education the University of the West of England drew up a job description, employee specification and job advert for a local Mens Family Learning Worker (see appendix 1). These documents were all designed to attract men with appropriate skills and experience from the Hartcliffe area of South Bristol, which was designated as the target area for the project.

The job advert was circulated to all local voluntary organisations and statutory agencies. Local schools were given sufficient copies for each pupil to take home. The advert was also included in local voluntary sector publications and circulated to local job centres. Headteachers and other key individuals agreed to talk about the vacancy to local men. As a result of informal feedback, it transpired that the job advert was successful in raising considerable local interest and discussion in the whole area of mens education and involvement in schools.

A total of 12 applications were received for the development worker post, including 5 applications from men living in the Hartcliffe area. Unfortunately, a large number of applications submitted from local men failed to meet the essential criteria. To a large extent, it seemed that this was due to lack of skills and experience in presenting information on a formal application form. This impression was fed back to a local TEC training provider so that additional support in completing job application forms could be provided to male trainees.

3 candidates were shortlisted and interviewed. On the basis of the agreed job criteria, the post was offered to and accepted by Duane Bryant. Duane is a local father who is actively involved in supporting his children's education through helping with reading and gardening initiatives at Hartcliffe Nursery School.

5 The Project Steering Group

A core project steering group was formed to support the project worker. The members of the group included:

Duane Bryant	Development Worker
Brian Hall	Headteacher, Hareclive Primary School
Lynne James	Headteacher, Hartcliffe Nursery School
George Robinson	Co-ordinator, Community Action Centre, UWE
Jane Taylor	Senior Co-ordinator, Bristol Community Education Centre

At an initial planning meeting, it was decided that the research with local men would be focused entirely on two schools in the Hartcliffe area: Hareclive Primary School and Hartcliffe Nursery School.

It was also decided that instead of setting up and running a mens tutor training programme, the development worker would aim to set up and deliver some mens family learning taster sessions by the end of the April. This amendment was made because, in the short time scale, it seemed a more relevant and achievable target, and because alternative tutor training opportunities for local men were being offered through Bristol's Community Education Service.

The full project steering group met at the beginning and at the end of the funding period. Meanwhile, the development worker met with either Jane or George, or both, at least once a week throughout the project.

6 Research Into National and Local Practice

Because of the unique nature of this initiative, there were some difficulties in identifying good practice in men's family learning or community education projects.

The development worker made contact with relevant national organisations and found out about work focusing on young men's literacy and health issues:

Playing For Success is a DfEE project to raise education standards, especially in urban areas. This is being achieved through premier and league football clubs who are being supported to set up study centres at their grounds. Boys are invited to take part in the scheme to improve their literacy, numeracy and IT skills.

Alive and kicking is a joint Department of Health and Community Education Development Centre initiative to tackle health issues for young men. Their report highlights specific health and mortality risks faced by men. The project aims to create better health awareness through Saturday and Sunday amateur football leagues.

The Basic Skills Agency has been supporting and funding family literacy projects across the country. They were not aware of any specific projects that had been developed and targeted specifically at men.

Locally, the development worker made contact with existing **family learning tutors** in South Bristol, and visited a number of groups in local schools. He also presented information about the Mens Family Learning Project to a meeting of the **Parents Council** at the local Barnados Family Centre. He also contacted the **UpSkilling Training Scheme**, a Local Labour and Training Initiative managed through Bristol's Housing Department.

Initial research into existing practice failed to identify any other men's family learning initiatives.

7 Data Gathering

The steering group felt that traditional data gathering methods such as postal surveys would not be appropriate for the target group and that a more personal approach was required. A personalised letter was addressed to approximately 60 male parents or carers of pupils at Hareclive School and Hartcliffe Nursery School. These letters were followed up with a telephone call by the development worker, one week late, to arrange an appointment either at home or school to discuss the key research questions and to go through a short questionnaire. These methods resulted in a 60% success rate, resulting in 36 home visits and completed questionnaires (see appendix 2).

The development worker used additional forms of communication, which generally proved less successful, including:

- meeting with and talking to men in the school playgrounds and waiting areas when they were either dropping off or collecting their child/children. This method only provided snatched time to talk about the project and arrange home visits. Only very few men were contacted this way.

- visiting existing family learning courses and talking to women to gain their views about getting men involved. Some questionnaires were handed out to women

participants in the hope that they might encourage men to respond. This resulted in a poor response, with only a few, incomplete questionnaires returned.

- some questionnaires were sent to men who, when telephoned, did not wish to take part in a face-to-face interview; this resulted in a nil response.

8 Data Obtained From Questionnaires

Out of the 36 questionnaires completed, it emerged that:

- 20 men said that they liked school as a child, showing a clear preference for subjects such as sport, craft and science:

Subject	**Men who liked these subjects at school**
sport	12
craft (e.g. woodwork; metalwork)	6
sciences (e.g. biology; physics)	6
maths	5
history	4
music	2
art	2
English	1

- 16 men said they disliked school or specific aspects of school life. The most common areas which were mentioned included:
-

Area of school mentioned	**Number of men who expressed dislike**
teachers	8
school in general	6
maths	4
French	2
English	2
bullies	2
other art or humanities areas	4

- 4 men expressed regret that they had not 'concentrated' or learned as much as they could at school

- a number of men referred to specific difficulties which had a negative impact on their education, including: family breakdown; not able to mix with other children; not able to 'settle' into secondary school; dyslexia; long term illness; being 'one of the lads', being 'lazy', and 'not able to get up in the morning'.

- 34 men said that they are already helping their children's education, with the most common areas of support including reading, writing, maths or playing:

Areas where men are helping their childrens learning	**Number of men providing help with this subject**
reading	26
writing	16
playing (e.g. puzzles; football; cards)	11
computers	4
maths	4
drawing	2

- 35 men out of 36 said that they had no knowledge of current family learning courses in their local area

- when asked about their preferences for gender specific family learning activities, 5 said that they would prefer men-only activities; 7 said that they would prefer a balanced gender mix (rather than being in a minority); 22 expressed no preference

- 16 men said that they would prefer part-time learning activities lasting 2-3 hours; 20 did not express any preference about the length of activities

- 15 men expressed no preference for when learning activities took place; 8 preferred afternoon sessions; 7 preferred evening sessions; 6 preferred morning sessions. 6 men said that they would find it difficult to attend any sessions due to work commitments.

- only 2 men out of 36 would like transport to be provided
- all 36 participants said that they had no preference about the gender of course tutors or facilitators

- all participants expressed a preference for courses taking place in local venues, whether they were schools, community centres or colleges

- 10 men out of 36 said they would need childcare facilities to take part in activities
- 26 out of 36 said that they were interested in helping out at their child's school or nursery. Of the remaining 10, one said that they would find it difficult to get involved due to lack of access support for their impairment, and four men said that they would find this difficult because of their work commitments
- when asked what skills they had to contribute to the school or to family learning programmes, most men felt that they had something to offer, including:

Skills men could offer	**Number of men who could offer this**
building skills e.g. bricklaying	6
sport	6
computers	5
DIY	4
gardening	4
cookery	2
electronics	2
art	2

- additional skills that were mentioned included: sign language; pottery; winemaking; outdoor activities; fishing; playing the guitar; woodwork; history
- men were asked what kind of courses or learning activities they would like; the most popular choices were:

Courses	**Number of men who expressed interest**
computers	16
motor mechanics	7
carpentry	5
bricklaying	5
sport	5
electronics	4
basic plumbing	3

gardening	3
cookery	3
music	3

- additional courses that were mentioned included: toy making; welding; first aid; fishing; teaching; printing; art; childcare/childminding

Additional Issues Raised

The development worker has noted particular issues which were mentioned by local men during home interviews, including:

- a number of men seemed dissatisfied with the support they had received from the local Job Club, including: unsupportive attitude of staff; 'belittling' of previous training and work experience; lack of up-to-date information about job vacancies

- a high proportion of men who are currently unemployed mentioned that they felt unable to undertake full time education and training due to Department of Social Security benefit regulations.

- the development worker interviewed 8 men who identified themselves as disabled. Issues for these men included the lack of access into both education and employment, and the lack of relevant information or support about employment opportunities, support with benefits etc.

9 Outcomes From Data Gathering

This phase of the project resulted in a number of positive outcomes for local men. Most men seemed very pleased to be asked if they could share their skills and services with local schools. Existing family learning activities had failed to appeal to men's interests and, because no-one had approached them directly, men with low confidence had been reluctant to come forward.

The appointment of a local dad as the development worker was key to the success of this initial needs analysis exercise. By using a structured questionnaire as an excuse to talk directly with other male parents and carers, Duane was able to find out about their experiences, skills and interests. He was also able to encourage men to get involved by talking about his own experience of volunteering in the local nursery school, stressing the personal benefits and offering a positive role model for other men.

Through individual interviews, a number of men expressed interest in getting involved in their child's primary school. The development worker was able to channel this interest, and by liaising with the Headteacher, locating an appropriate link person in the school, and encouraging specific men to come forward, he clearly

acted as a catalyst for men's involvement and development.

When this project began in February 1998, only one man was volunteering in Hareclive Primary School. Within a few weeks of his appointment, Duane had successfully encouraged eight men to get involved in the school as volunteers, and also supported one man to enrol on a full-time training course. Successes so far have included:

- 1 man is now teaching four children and two dads to play the guitar
- 1 man has started voluntary work as a part-time learning assistant - this man was retired and is now able to draw on his extensive qualifications and experience
- 2 men are providing voluntary help with reading and maths classes
- 2 men will soon start to decorate the school corridor walls with murals involving the children from all years - both men have art qualifications and are interested in teaching children
- 1 man is offering voluntary help with gardening in the school grounds
- 1 man has agreed to set up and teach computer lessons - as a disabled man he is interested in providing the children with a positive role model
- 1 man is starting a full-time electronics course at the local further education college from September 1998. By linking this man with the local Upskilling team, the development worker has enabled him to obtain a grant to cover his course fees and expenses

10 Mens Family Learning Taster Courses

On the basis of feedback from men, it was decided that three taster family learning events would be held at the end of April, including bricklaying, woodwork and computers.

The taster days were planned to be fully accessible to local men by offering sessions during the morning, afternoon and early evening. It was also planned that the sessions would be held at Hareclive Primary School, and that they would enable both men and children at the school to work together on joint activities. It was hoped that by inviting men to share their existing skills with pupils this would not only increase their own confidence, but would also provide pupils - particularly boys - with positive male role models.

Session Planning and Preparation

For the project development worker, the preparation and planning for the taster courses involved the following tasks:

- discussion of ideas with steering group and with local headteachers to gain support and advice about how to proceed

- making a list of materials and tools required for sessions

- contacting local businesses and local secondary school for sponsorship or free loan of tools and/or equipment; arranged for collection of equipment in time for sessions

- recruiting course tutors - local men were identified from the local community to facilitate the woodwork and bricklaying tasters; a school teacher agreed to run the computer sessions

- planning course content and structure with tutors

- designing and circulating course publicity, including flyer which was sent home with all pupils; press release which was sent to local and national media (see appendix 3)

- purchasing necessary materials for taster sessions

- contacting all men who had been interviewed, and others, to encourage their participation in the taster events

- collating reply slips from interested participants, and arranging childcare for those who needed it

- designing and producing a session evaluation sheet (see appendix 4)

Publicity

A press release about the taster sessions was sent to local television, newspaper and radio stations, as well as the Times Educational Supplement. The response from the various media organisations was extremely positive, including:

- the Bristol Evening Post published a small article publicising the taster sessions

- a local BBC television crew visited the first taster session on 21st April - footage was shown throughout the day of men and children working together, and the project worker being interviewed about the project

- local BBC radio also covered the first taster session on 21st April

- the Times Educational Supplement visited the bricklaying taster session on 28th April - adults and children were interviewed and photographed and an article appeared in the 8th May edition (see appendix 5)

Taster Activities

Woodworking

Woodworking taster sessions were held throughout the day on Tuesday 21st April. A local man who runs a craft workshop in a Hartcliffe-based business unit offered to run the session with his father. Both men provided considerable expertise, in addition to a range of woodworking tools and materials. The sessions were held in a garage attached to Hareclive Primary School. Withywood Community School also provided a collection of woodwork tools. During each session, the tutors demonstrated step-by-step techniques for constructing a range of woodwork products, including two types of bird boxes, including wall-mounted and free-standing styles, as well as a push-along cart. Adult participants worked with two or three children, helping them to complete the necessary tasks to construct a bird box or cart.

Introduction to Computers

On the 23rd April, one of the teachers at Hareclive Primary School facilitated men-only computer training. As well as demonstrating the basic functions of the computer, introducing various Microsoft computer packages, the men also had an opportunity to find out how to use internet facilities and E-mail. It was decided that the pupils would not take part in these sessions, as many men had little or no computer experience, and preferred to try out new skills on their own.

Bricklaying

On the 28th April, throughout the day, a local bricklayer provided expertise and appropriate equipment to teach local men and school pupils about basic bricklaying. Demonstrations were performed, including cement mixing, health and safety, laying bricks, using various spirit levels etc. Each adult worked with a small group of children to construct one or more bench in the school playground. While the men carried and laid out the bricks, the children used trowels to apply cement to bind the seats together.

Taster Outcomes

There was a good response to the taster sessions, and attendance included:

Session	No. of Men	No. of Children
Woodworking	16	26
Computers	11	0
Bricklaying	18	15

Because some men attended more than one session, the overall attendance was:

Total No. Men Who Participated	Total No. Children Who Participated
25	44

In terms of the timing of all sessions, it seems that the early evening sessions between 5 - 7pm were most popular.

Feedback From Participants

The feedback received from participating men was very positive. In answer to the question 'what did they like about the course', comments included:

'using the internet for the first time'
'making things with wood'
'it gave me the chance to do something I haven't done since my school days'
'working alongside children'
'hands-on, can afford to mess it up, helpful advice'
'friendly atmosphere and I learned something about bricklaying'

The experience of men and children working together was also popular:

'I think its really good that the school should involve parents and children in activities..the children enjoyed it.'
'it pulled us to work as part of a team'
'I enjoyed working with my grandchild because we made something useful'
'I found that we all had something to do with computers in common'

Those things that participants would have improved about the taster programme included:

'it could have been a little longer per session'
'having computers that don't crash on you when you least expect it'
'the woodwork room could have been warmer'

Most participants identified interest in various progression routes:

Progression Opportunities:	Number of men interested:
one-day activities (adult and child)	3
10 week course, 2 hours a week (adult)	6
after-school club (adult and child)	6
advanced courses (adult only)	7

Feedback From Development Worker

The development worker has written a short evaluation of the taster sessions:

'As you can see from the attendance figures, the skills based courses proved to be the most successful with men and children. Basic techniques were gained in a positive and fun atmosphere, where everybody worked together in a team effort. Assistance was available at all times and if any difficulties were encountered by either men or children, the course tutors or skilled dads involved were able to help quickly (this prevented boredom amongst those who got stuck).

The children's excitement at having been able to interact with the participating adults and being able to make something at the same time was a sight to behold. The pride was written on these young impressionable faces, was fulfilment enough for us all.

In hindsight, the woodwork taster was probably the most successful because everyone got a chance to complete a 'hands on' task for themselves. On several occasions during the woodwork workshops, the children tried to collect the bird boxes they had made, ready to show their parents. Unfortunately, because they were still wet with wood preservative they had to wait. What more can you say about this kind of positive attitude.

I was disappointed that some men did not turn up when they said they would. However, I am really happy that more dads are now working with the school helping childrens development under the national curriculum.
There is still a lot of work to be done in this area, with more courses to be arranged'.

Feedback From School Staff

The Headteacher commented that:

'Men have not been seen around Hareclive school for at least 6 years, other than to bring children to school and pick them up at the end of the day. Its been a great pleasure to see for the very first time men coming in to do information technology, woodwork, bricklaying - with the children. What is even better is that their interest has been sustained. Some of them are working in classrooms and that is a first'.

One of the teachers at Hareclive Primary School wrote a short evaluation of the taster sessions:

'On my visits to the various sessions, I found the children and adults working very well together - totally focused on the task in hand. The woodworking course went extremely well and the carpentry team proved to be very well prepared and adept at passing on basic carpentry skills to children and adults alike. Both the children and adults were very proud of their finished products e.g. bird boxes.

All the fathers gained from the adult computer course, both those who were absolute beginners and those who had no previous experience.

Although I saw less of the bricklaying sessions, feedback from pupils indicates that they learnt some fundamentals about bricklaying and enjoyed the experience. The product of the course - i.e. seating for the playground areas is much needed and very welcome. There was a very positive item on the course when the BBC filmed one of the sessions and interviewed one of the fathers taking part.

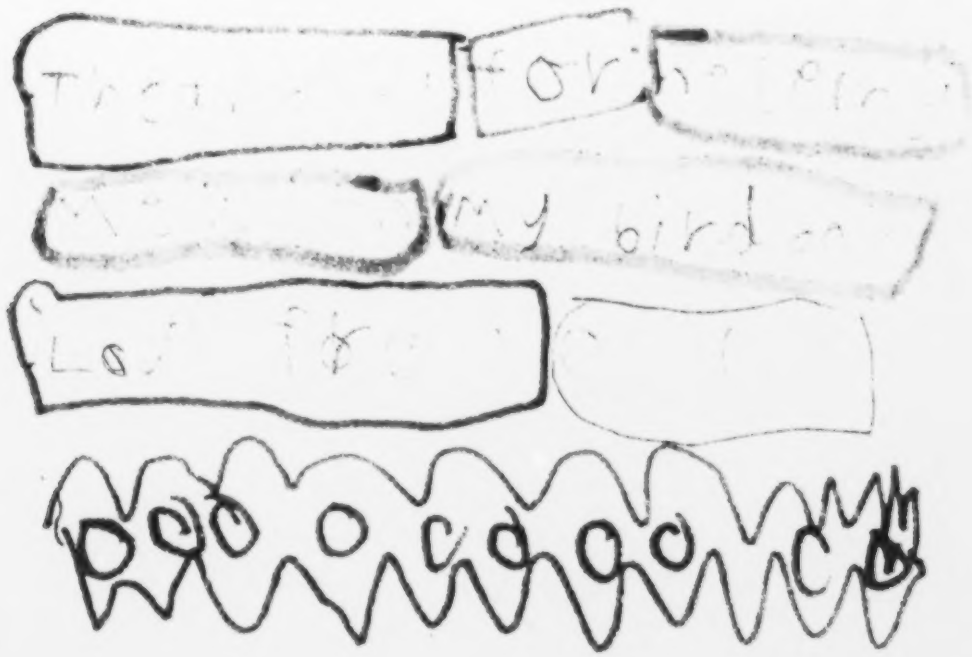
I feel the fathers taking part will feel far more comfortable about coming into the school and working with children in the future and hopefully some will feel more empowered to go on to more long term skills courses'.

Feedback From Pupils

The children who participated in these sessions were invited to write letters to the tutors or companies who had supported the taster sessions. One of these letters is included in appendix 6. Their comments include:

'Dear carpentry team..thank you for helping us make bird boxes. We really enjoyed ourselves. Will you come again please? Best wishes from Alex'

'Dear Bricklayers..thank you for helping us with the wall that we were making it was great fun. And it is a nice thing that we made. Yours sincerely, Leanne'



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11 Future Plans

As a result of this initial pilot project, a number of future plans have been prepared and action is already underway, including:

- the University of the West of England and Bristol's Community Education Service have made a commitment to extend the project until December 1998. Funding has been identified to continue to employ the development worker. A meeting is planned with the local secondary school to find out how the project could be replicated or adapted to support fathers to support boys learning at secondary level

- the development worker is attending an accredited community education course entitled 'Community Action Training' which will provide access to higher level training in community work.

- the development worker is forming a Father's Action Group at Hareclive Primary School to build on their initial successes. It is intended that this group will formulate a bid for a Millennium Commission Family Learning Award to be submitted by May 22nd

- Bristol Community Education Service have arranged for new part-time adult education courses in computers, woodwork and bricklaying to be run at the local community secondary school from September 1998. This will provide progression opportunities for those men who took part in taster sessions at Hareclive School

- Results from the Mens Family Learning Project will be disseminated with Community Education colleagues so that successes can be replicated in other areas of Bristol

12 Conclusion

The development worker and project steering group members feel that significant progress was made towards identified aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the original funding proposal.

In a short time scale, the development worker engaged at least 25 'hard to reach' men into community learning activities. The main factors which contributed to this success are:

- the employment of a local man, with successful experience of volunteering in early years educational settings, who was able to win the trust and interest of other local men;

- adopting a personal approach to needs analysis and project development, rather

than relying on paper-based research or course publicity methods alone;

- the active support and encouragement of project partners, particularly steering group members and staff at local schools;

- devising learning activities which clearly depended on the sharing of skills and aimed to validate mens existing skills, rather than implementing a deficit model of family learning designed to compensate for perceived skills gaps;

- offering topics and activities which had a clear appeal to men, i.e. woodwork, computers and bricklaying

It is clear that there are many complex barriers which prevent men from working class communities from accessing educational services and playing an equal role as partners in their childrens education. However, through the research and taster sessions which were implemented through this project, it is also clear that men from urban and peripheral housing estates have many talents and resources to contribute to the urgent task of raising childrens achievement. Through appropriate processes and practices, it is also possible to fully engage these men in community learning and parental partnership initiatives.

BRISTOL COMMUNITY EDUCATION SERVICE and THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND

University of the West of England

are looking for a:

MENS FAMILY LEARNING PROJECT WORKER

Background information

We are interested to find out why so few men are taking part in family learning and other community education activities which are being run in the Hartcliffe area. We want to know why courses are not attracting men and to develop new activities with and for men in the area.

We are looking for someone who has good local knowledge who is interested in community education and is keen to help men get full access to education services and activities. Because of the nature of this work, we are looking for a male worker and the post is covered by the Sex Discrimination Act 1978, Section 7(2)(e).

We need someone who is confident, has good verbal communication and is able to get on with people. You will need to have the right personal qualities rather than specific work experience or educational background. Job secondment will be considered and arranged if necessary.

Job Details

Main Job purpose:	To meet with and talk with men about their current learning opportunities, future goals and what they would like from a family learning programme
Job Hours	25 hours per week for 9 weeks
Hourly Pay Rate	£9.68 per hour
Closing Date For Applications	Friday 13th February

If you are interested in finding out more about this job or you would like an application pack, please contact:

Jane Taylor
Community Education Service
The Gatehouse Centre
Hareclive Road
Withywood
Bristol BS13 9JN Telephone/Minicom (0117) 9649642

This project is being funded by the National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE)

Job Description

Job Title: Mens Family Learning Project Worker

Hourly Rate: £9.68 per hour
25 hours x 9 weeks (total 225 hours)

Job Purpose To work with local men in the Hartcliffe area to help identify learning needs and set up some family learning activities to support fathers and other male carers to support their children's learning

Main Tasks

- To meet with and talk with men about their current learning opportunities, future goals, and what they would like from a family learning programme
- To consult with a range of additional interest groups to find out what support and resources they could contribute to a men's programme, including: local schools, employers, voluntary organisations, further education colleges etc.
- To prepare 2 pilot men's family learning activities for the summer term 1998
- To produce an evaluation of the Men's Family Learning Development Project

Desirable Experience
- recent experience of working with men who live on estates where inhabitants do not normally access adult learning opportunities
- experience of adult and/or community education, either as a learner or a tutor

Background Information
This is a short-term project, funded by NIACE between February and April 1998, as part of a national initiative to extend learning communities. The project is being co-ordinated by representatives from: Bristol's Community Education Service, the University of the West of England and at least one local school.

Closing Date For Applications: February 13th 1998

Interviews Will Be Held On: Friday 20th February 1998

To Start Work On: Monday 23rd February 1998

Due to the nature of the work, we require a male worker, Sex Discrimination Act 1978, Section 7(2)(e)

PERSON SPECIFICATION

	Essential	Desirable
1. Qualification		
2. Experience	- experience of community or adult education, either as a tutor or learner	- recent experience of working with men living on peripheral or urban estates
3. Knowledge and Understanding	- knowledge of the local area - awareness of the issues which result from living on an outer-lying estate	- awareness of current concerns about boys underachievement
4. Skills/Personal Qualities	- confidence - good verbal communication - able to get on with people - persistence - able to take the initiative - motivated and able to motivate others	

Did you like school as a child? YES ☐ NO ☐

Please note likes and dislikes about your schooling

Do you help with your child's education development at present? YES ☐ NO ☐

If yes how?

Have you ever heard of Family Learning? YES ☐ NO ☐

If yes how and what do you think of it?

What would make family learning courses more attractive to you as a Male eg, mixed/male only?

If you were interested in any type of learning scheme, when would you like them to take place (TICK AS MANY BOXES AS YOU WANT)

	AM	PM	EVEN.
MONDAY			
TUESDAY			
WEDNESDAY			
THURSDAY			
FRIDAY			
SATURDAY			
SUNDAY			
OTHER: eg Summer Holidays etc			

How long would you like these courses to last e.g. 1 Hour, 1 day, 5 days etc?

Would you become more involve if food/drink was provided?

YES	NO

What type of activities would you like to see courses run on e.g. Sport; Craft/Technical skills; Gardening; Computers; Cookery; Fishing; Cycling Proficiency/Maintenance or any others not mentioned (Please specify)

Would you prefer a Male/Female tutor or would it not matter?

M	F	D/M

Where would you like these courses to take place:-

SCHOOLS	COLLEGES	COMMUNITY CENTRE	OTHER (Please specify)

If you would like to take part in one of these courses, would you need care facilities for either child/partner/parent etc?

YES	NO

If yes who for (if child, what is/are the ages?)

What skills have you got that could be shared with other dads, carers and children?

Would you be interested in helping out at your local school/nursery?

YES	NO

If yes please give name address and/or telephone number

(see question above if child care facilities are needed)

Are there any other male family members or friends who you think might be interested in getting involved in either family learning or helping out at school/nursery eg brother, granddad, dad. If yes please give name, address and/or phone number.

When this questionnaire is complete a report will compile results. Would you be interested in receiving a copy?	YES	NO

If yes please give address details

PRESS RELEASE * PRESS RELEASE * PRESS RELEASE

HARTCLIFFE MEN - BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE

It's a familiar story throughout the country: lots of parents getting involved in local schools to help with children's learning, but no men!
But things are very different at Hareclive Primary School and Hartcliffe Nursery School. In a pioneering scheme, local men are being coaxed and invited to take part in family learning activities at the schools. The taster courses will not only get men back into learning for themselves, they are intended to support childrens learning by providing positive male role models.
The Mens Family Learning Development Project, backed by NIACE (the National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education), is also being supported by Bristol's Community Education Service, local schools and the University of the West of England. 'We've wanted to involve more men in the school for some time. This project has provided a real opportunity to make more personal contact with dads and others, and its already having a really positive impact on the children' said the headteacher of Hareclive school, Brian Hall.
Dads, uncles, brothers and all local men are being invited to take part in three exciting day taster activities, including bricklaying, woodwork and computers. Working together with children at the school, the men will spend the day building brick seating and landscaping, constructing wooden bird boxes, planters and toys, and having a go at using computers to print chidren's stories and books. Any man living in the Hartcliffe area is welcome to come along to any of the planned sessions, at any time between 9.30am and 7.00pm, including:

Woodwork Course	April 21st
Computer Course	April 23rd
Bricklaying	April 28th

Duane Bryant, a local dad, is the development worker for this project. He has arranged for other local men to lead the taster sessions and to share their skills. Local companies have also offered to support this scheme by providing tools and materials.

Future plans include more local men getting involved in helping with childrens learning at the school and also helping themselves through new courses. Computer, woodwork and bricklaying courses are all planned to take place in the local area from September 1998. If you live in the area, and you want to get involved, please contact Duane Bryant on 9649642.

For more information, please contact:

Duane Bryant
or Jane Taylor

tel: 9649642 ext.15
fax: 9649514

Woodwork Course

FREE course for all men, dads, granddads, older brothers, to be held at: Hareclive Primary School, Moxham Drive, Hartcliffe

Three separate one-day course session. You will come in the morning, or in the afternoon or evening - or stay all day!

Date of course: Tuesday 21st April 1998

Time(s): 9.30 am - 11.30 am
1.30 pm - 3.30 pm
5.00 pm - 7.00 pm

Cost: FREE

Creche: FREE

This course will cover:
Basic woodwork skills in techniques, with instruction on how to make a wooden object of your choice.

If you are interested, please complete the tear off slip below and hand it to either the reception at Hareclive Primary School, or at the Hartcliffe Nursery reception.

Please return by Tuesday 14th April 1998.

Bristol Education Directorate

(Reply Slip)

Woodwork Course

(Hareclive Primary School)

❒ I would like to be considered for the above course.

Name: .....

Address: .....

Telephone Number: .....

Preferred Time: *(please tick box)* ❒ 9.30 am ❒ 11.30 am ❒ 5.00 pm

I will require the use of the FREE creche and have: ..... Child/ren

Bricklaying Course

FREE course for all men, dads, granddads, older brothers, to be held at: Hareclive Primary School, Moxham Drive, Hartcliffe

Three separate one-day course session. You will come in the morning, or in the afternoon or evening - or stay all day!

Date of course: Tuesday 28th April 1998

Time(s): 9.30 am - 11.30 am
1.30 pm - 3.30 pm
5.00 pm - 7.00 pm

Cost: FREE

Creche: FREE

This course will cover:
Demonstration of bricklaying techniques/advice from the tutor, followed by hands-on involvement in constructing seating in the school playgrounds with children at school.

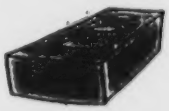
If you are interested, please complete the tear off slip below and hand it to either the reception at Hareclive Primary School, or at the Hartcliffe Nursery reception.

Please return by Tuesday 21st April 1998.

Bristol Education Directorate

(Reply Slip)

Bricklaying Course



(Hareclive Primary School)

❒ I would like to be considered for the above course.

Name: .....

Address: .....

Telephone Number: .....

Preferred Time: *(please tick box)* ❒ 9.30 am ❒ 11.30 am ❒ 5.00 pm

I will require the use of the FREE creche and have: ..... Child/ren

Computer Course

FREE course for all men, dads, granddads, older brothers, to be held at: Hareclive Primary School, Moxham Drive, Hartcliffe

Three separate course sessions to choose from, for your convenience. You will come in the morning, or in the afternoon or evening - or stay all day!

Date of course: Thursday 23rd April 1998

Time(s): 9.30 am - 11.30 am
1.30 pm - 3.30 pm
4.00 pm - 6.00 pm

Cost: FREE

Creche: FREE

This course will cover:
Basic and advanced computer skills, with instruction from an IT tutor.
From keyboard skills to the use of software programmes.

If you are interested, please complete the tear off slip below and hand it to either the reception at Hareclive Primary School, or at the Hartcliffe Nursery reception.

Please return by Thursday 16th April 1998.

Bristol Education Directorate

(Reply Slip)

Computer Course

(Hareclive Primary School)

❒ I would like to be considered for the above course.

Name: .....

Address: .....

Telephone Number: .....

Preferred Time: *(please tick box)* ❒ 9.30 am ❒ 11.30 am ❒ 4.00 pm

I will require the use of the FREE creche and have: ..3..... Child/ren

Feedback Sheet for Woodwork Taster Course

Please would you take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire, which will enable us to obtain your views on how the course went for you. Thank you very much for your help. Please hand this questionnaire back to your tutor before you leave.

Did you find the course interesting and helpful? Please give reason(s).	
What did you like about the course? Please give details.	
What did you dislike about the Course? Please give details.	
If the course could be improved, how? Please give details.	
Did you find the course tutors to be helpful? If so, why?	
Did you find the course tutors knowledgeable? Please give details.	
Did they help by demonstrating techniques? Please give details.	
Did you enjoy working with the children and other dads etc? If so, why?	
Any other comments?	

Please supply your name, if possible:

Thank you for your time. We hope you enjoyed this Taster Course

Where dads do the spadework

Jobless fathers on a mentoring scheme are getting back to work — at school. **Dorothy Lepkowska** reports

Dressed in their tattiest clothes and workmen's boots they could have been mistaken for contractors repairing the playground.

But the eight men mixing mortar and demonstrating bricklaying to pupils are local fathers taking part in a mentoring scheme which aims to get them back to work while giving pupils positive male role models.

The Men's Family Learning Development Project is based in Hartcliffe, Bristol — on one of the largest council estates in the South-west and an area of high unemployment.

The men have been taking part in "taster" courses at Hareclive primary in computing, woodwork and bricklaying.

Duane Bryant, the development worker for the project, said: "It projects a positive image of education to the children when they see their fathers involved in school. Most of the fathers have probably not achieved very much themselves academically and now regret it, or have not been given the opportunity.

"This gives them a chance to try their hand at something new and the confidence perhaps to apply for jobs."

Paul Hodgkiss, who has a son and a daughter at the school, hopes to become a teacher. Currently unemployed, Mr Hodgkiss has been asked to help out with one-to-one maths teaching at the school.

He said: "Originally I planned to help with reading and spelling but the teachers found out that I was quite strong on maths.

"When I was at primary school the teaching staff was split roughly 50-50 men to women. This seems no longer to be the case. Boys need role models, particularly as many children in this area are from broken homes and have no male permanently at home. I am interested in my children's education and want to be involved, as do all the fathers who come here."

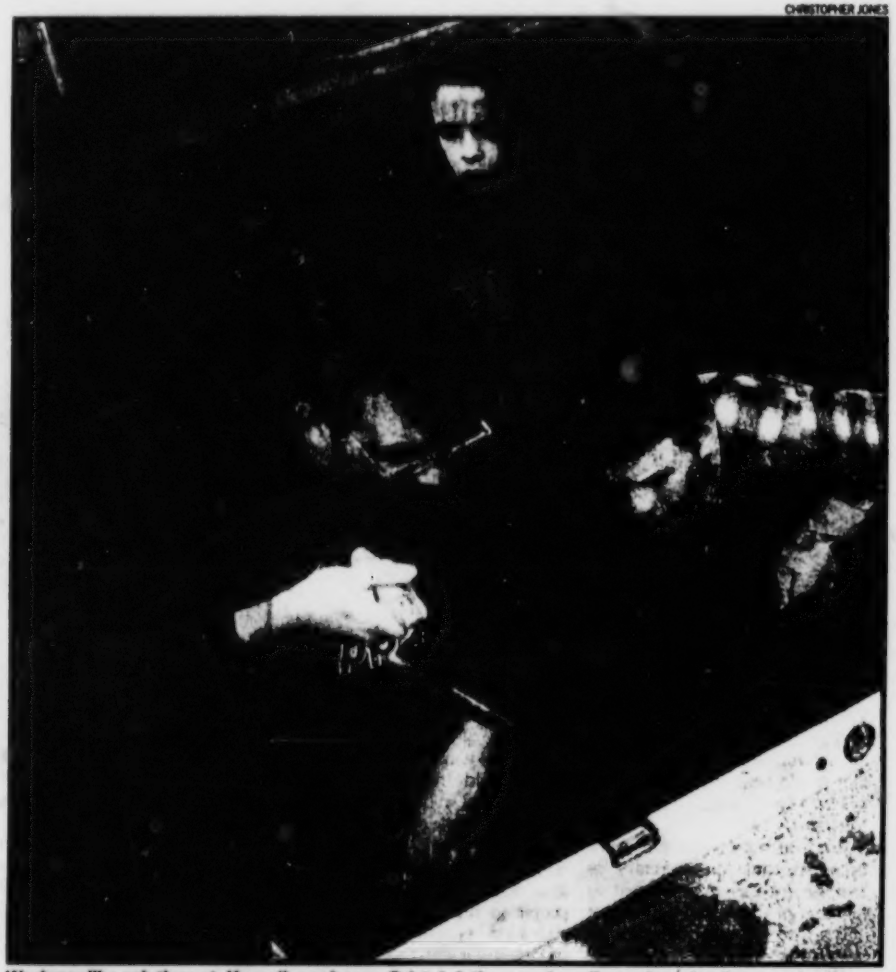
The project, which is backed by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education and the University of the West of England, also has pupils' support. Matthew House, aged nine, said: "We have learned that shovels can be dangerous. The dads teach us things that the teachers don't."

Teachers say they have already noticed a difference in families' attitudes to school and learning.

Stuart Roach, class teacher at Hareclive primary, said: "Half the battle with teaching children is getting the parents interested and involved.

"We believe the scheme has broken down the reluctance of some dads — which may be based on poor personal school experience — to come into school and it has made them more involved in what their children are doing. Many feel more confident to help their children at home with reading."

CHRISTOPHER JONES



Workmanlike solution: at Hareclive primary, Bristol, fathers and pupils are learning from each other

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Dear Carpenters,

Thank you

For making bird boxs with us. They were good. I am going to put mine in a tree.

from casie loveridge.

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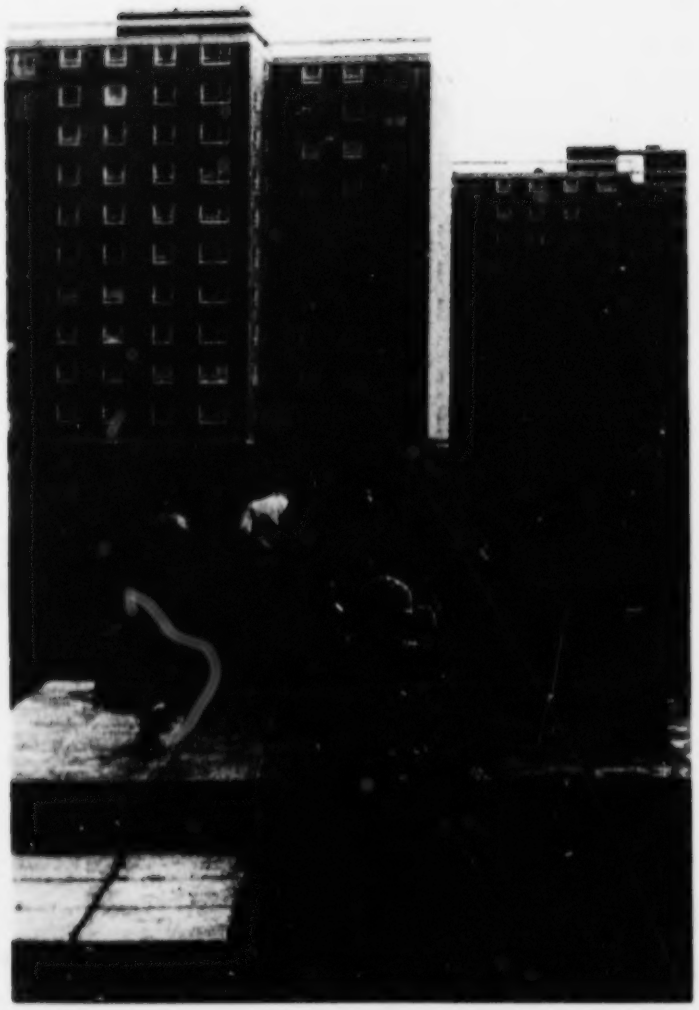

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